

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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to hurricane relief effort

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) is accepting donations to fund both the immediate needs and long-term Mississippi Baptist disaster relief efforts along the Gulf Coast and throughout the state. Checks should be made payable to MBCB, with "Hurricane Relief" noted on the memo line, and mailed to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Fully 100% of the donations will be used directly for hurricane relief. More information on how to contribute can be obtained by calling (601) 292-3206, or e-mailing mbcbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org.

Adopt A Church partnerships set

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) has initiated a program in cooperation with the North American Mission Board that will match churches and individuals with Mississippi Baptist churches devastated by Hurricane Katrina in partnership-style, ongoing relationships.

Jim Didlake, MBCB Men's Ministry Director and the convention board's coordinator of disaster relief ministries, said the program is open now to Southern Baptist churches in other states as well as Mississippi Baptist churches that wish to partner with these devastated churches in the state.

Churches wishing to adopt devastated churches, and devastated churches willing to be adopted, should register as soon as possible by visiting www.mbc.org and clicking on the "Hurricane Katrina Information" crawl at the top of the page. Churches that fill out either form will be contacted within three business days, Didlake said.

"This will prove to be an ideal way to link hurting churches with churches being led by the Lord to make a substantial, long-term commitment to Kingdom work in the affected area. We know both the giver and receiver will be blessed," Didlake said.

'Darker the night, brighter the light'

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP and local reports) — "The darker the night, the brighter the light," Mississippi Baptist leader Jim Futral told North American Mission Board (NAMB) staff September 15, applauding the response of Southern Baptist disaster relief workers who were first on the scene with feeding units following Hurricane Katrina.

Mississippi, southern Louisiana, and Alabama took the hardest hit from the hurricane's landfall Aug. 29. Estimates are that 90,000 square miles were affected by the hurricane, which Futral said devastated many parts of his state, including the city of Biloxi. More than 300,000 displaced people now reside in Mississippi.

"Just in Biloxi, Miss., 5,000 homes have been destroyed or are going to be bulldozed," said Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "That's 20% of the entire city of Biloxi." USA Today describes Waveland, meanwhile, as "the town that vanished," Futral said, reading from the newspaper.

Southern Baptist disaster relief brings light to people who were spiritually blind, Futral said in his comments in chapel.

"We're not having folks saved [only] on Sunday, we're having folks saved day after day after day. In the two weeks after

Katrina one of our churches helping displaced folks had over 50 people saved," Futral recounted. "Thousands of people are experiencing what it means to be touched by people with the love of Jesus ... and you're doing it."

Speaking about how Christians should deal with disasters like Katrina, Futral read from John 9's account of Jesus healing a blind man.

Futral said disciples walking with Jesus evaluated the man's situation, asking Jesus what sin the man's parents or he committed to cause his blindness. Some leaders in the Christian community are saying the same thing about New Orleans and the coast of Mississippi, arguing their sin brought God's judgment upon them, he said.

"While some folks like the disciples want to evaluate, there are others who elevate," Futral said. "Jesus says that's not the issue, that's not what we're after, that's not who we are, that's not what we need to do. What we need to do is figure out what God would have us to do to make a difference in this man's life. We need to look and see God at work in this experience."

Introducing Futral, NAMB President Robert E. (Bob) Reccord said Mississippi churches are opening their doors to Katrina evacuees in unprecedented fashion — like one church that took in an extended family of 68 people.

"[The family] said we've never had anybody care for us like Southern Baptists... who have not only opened their homes and their arms, but their hearts to us," Reccord said.

Mississippi is among 36 Southern Baptist state conventions activated to provide disaster relief services following Katrina that includes preparing and feeding meals, providing hot showers, laundry units, and

cleanup and recovery services. More than 5,000 Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have served nearly three million meals to victims of the hurricane.

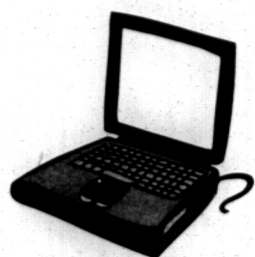
The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force mass feeding unit has been stationed at First Church, Biloxi, since shortly after the monster storm moved across the Gulf Coast. The unit, being staffed by Mississippi Baptist volunteers, is preparing 12,000 meals per day — 120% of the unit's capacity.

In addition, Mississippi Baptists have completed over 6,000 chain saw jobs and continue to offer medical treatment to victims at feeding sites.

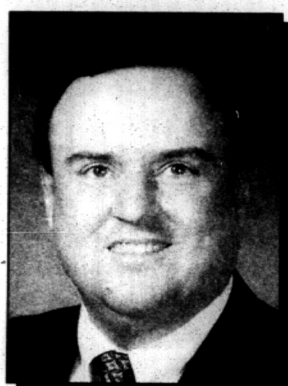
"Mud-out" teams are beginning their work helping storm victims clean their homes and make the structures habitable once again. To volunteer for the Hurricane Katrina response, call (601) 292-3206, (601) 503-7517, or (601) 672-2772. The e-mail address is mbcbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org.



NAMB WELCOMES FUTRAL — North American Mission Board President Robert E. (Bob) Reccord (left) welcomes Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Director Jim Futral to a September 15 chapel outside the board's offices in suburban Atlanta. Mississippi was hard hit during the landfall of Hurricane Katrina on August 29, and Southern Baptist disaster relief units have been on the scene since shortly after Katrina's winds died down. (BP photo)



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The lemon scenario

A Mississippi Baptist volunteer was working at the Hurricane Katrina shelter at her church a couple of weeks ago when a woman in a car stopped her as she was crossing the street in front of the church's Family Life Center.

"Please help me," the woman in the car told the volunteer. "I have a trunk load of food to donate to your church's shelter and I don't know where to drop it off. Can you tell me?"

The volunteer was of course more than happy to direct the woman to the rear of the Family Life Center where donations were being accepted. As a matter of fact, the volunteer dropped what she was doing and met the woman at the designated area so she could help unload the food.

The woman got out of her car, popped the trunk lid, and proudly pointed to several dozen bags of... lemons. That's right. Hundreds and hundreds of lemons. Apparently she was driving by a local supermarket and spied the store's produce workers placing the out-of-

date lemons in the dumpster. She pulled over, asked for the lemons, and the workers dumped them in her trunk instead of the dumpster.

Everyone is familiar with the axiom, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," but the donated lemons were well past their "sell by" date to start with — a food safety issue with legal ramifications — and the church volunteers were just too busy tending to the victims to stop what they were doing and come up with a practical use for this odd donation.

There is no doubt that the woman's heart was in the right place and her motive was sincere, but her effort sadly

"BUT ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, THE
PEOPLE WHO ATTEND OUR CHURCH
REALLY WANT TO BE HERE!"



had little effect on the needs of the storm victims. Unfortunately, this lemon scenario is being repeated in many ways across Mississippi as well-meaning, charitably-minded people seek to help Katrina victims. On the other hand, some people see this as a golden opportunity to jettison anything they no longer want in their houses.

There are stories of truckloads of ragged used goods containing just one shoe of a pair and expired over-the-counter cold medicine. There are stories of eighteen-wheelers filled with used clothes for storm

victims that have simply had to dump their loads on the side of the road, because there was no place yet on the coast to unload it, no one to help unload it, and the donors had not arranged beforehand to have all those details taken care of.

There are also stories of brand-new goods with nowhere to go and large amounts of food spoilage — not because such supplies are unneeded, but because of the lack of knowledge about conditions on the Coast and a failure to coordinate with on-scene disaster relief responders. One anecdotal tale describes an entire truckload of fresh lettuce rotting in the truck because no one on the Coast has refrigeration right now for that much fresh lettuce.

It's a shame whenever people's generous donations to the Katrina relief effort end up on a trash heap somewhere along the Gulf Coast. There is a solution. There is a better way.

People wishing to volunteer or make donations to the Katrina relief campaign can coordinate their efforts with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force, which deployed to the Coast before the hurricane's wind even died down. They've been there the whole time and know where

there are needs to be met.

Contact the Task Force at (601) 292-3206, (601) 503-7517, and (601) 672-2772. The e-mail address is mbcdbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org. More information on the Katrina relief effort, including how to make much-needed cash gifts, can be found at www.mbcdb.org.

Make your effort count for something. Our Christian witness during this relief and recovery period is too important to have a single effort wasted for lack of oversight and coordination.

Let's do this the right way.

GUEST OPINION:



The Christian College: A Viable Choice

By Bettye Rogers Coward, President
Blue Mountain College

lives partner; and the acquisition of lifestyle habits. Yet, the rationale for college choice among many young people reflects a lack of understanding of the issues which are most critical to effective preparation for a meaningful and productive life.

Many reasons can be given for choosing a Christian college but perhaps the most compelling one is the focus on the value of each student as a creation of God, with a soul that needs the same degree of nurturing that the mind receives. In fact, at the Christian college, holistic development (mind, body, and soul) is central to the educational experience, not a matter of chance but a matter of intentionality. A culture which supports holistic development will naturally lead to concerns

about the choices students make about their lives. It is important to help students discover their God-given talents and abilities and to enhance them as they find their place in Kingdom's work. A college is Christian, not because of requirements of chapel or even a Bible course; it is Christian because its commitment to the cause of Christ permeates and penetrates every nuance of the collegiate experience.

Christian higher education is affordable. The sticker price does not represent the actual cost of attending college. Without knowledge of scholarships and other forms of financial aid and unpublished costs, it is not possible to know the actual cost of attendance. That having been stated, however, it is important to recognize that quality education which

reflects caring and nurturing of students as individuals is an investment. The most expensive education in the long run is the wrong education.

When we think about the challenges in the world that young people will face, we must ensure the education of a generation of Christian young people who leave college with a deep and abiding faith which will encourage and sustain them throughout unpredictable life events. The time has come for a renewed effort among our Christian parents and church youth leadership to encourage the consideration of attending a Christian college. As young people consider their options in colleges, they need to hear significant adults in their lives promoting the Christian college. They need the opportunity to visit Christian college campuses to get the feel of the climate and environment, to interact with professors and current students, and to have caring adults pray with them about the decision they make regarding where they will spend some of the most shaping years in their lives.

What does it profit an individual if he/she gains the whole world and loses his/her own soul?!

Pastor's special skill fortifies relief workers



SECRET RECIPE — Former restaurant owner Johnny Rayford, who now pastors Crestwood New Life Church in Jackson, pours clam chowder he made recently for volunteers at the hurricane-ravaged First Church in Bay St. Louis. (BP photo by Sherri Brown)

BAY ST LOUIS, Miss. (BP) — When Johnny Rayford received the e-mail to Mississippi pastors requesting volunteers across the Mississippi Gulf Coast, he decided he had to respond.

Rayford immediately gathered all the equipment he would need and headed south. But his truck wasn't loaded with chain saws, cleaning supplies or water.

Rayford, pastor of Crestwood New Life Church in Jackson, brought cooking pots, four portable gas burners, propane tanks, a pile of spices, and boxes of food and ended up at First Baptist in Bay St. Louis, doing one of the things he does best.

Rayford admitted he's not good with a chain saw, "but I can do some cooking." It was less than an hour before he made good on that statement.

At one time Rayford owned a Jackson restaurant called A Little Taste of New Orleans, and was pastor of a small church. A fire that destroyed his restaurant sent him in a new direction. "My restaurant was my passion," he recounted, "and when it becomes your passion it consumes you. When the restaurant burned down I lost it all, so I gave myself to God. Now He gets everything. He's my passion."

Two years ago he began a church with five people. Today the church has 125 people worshipping on Sundays and almost as many involved in daily ministries, including food, clothing, and after-school programs.

Rayford hasn't lost his love of cooking, however. He cooks every third Sunday for all New Life church members and, in Bay St. Louis, he cooked for all the volunteers and First Church members cleaning up the flooded and damaged church.

"Your taste buds will be dancing," Rayford promised the workers who walked through the church's newly cleaned and sterilized kitchen.

Rayford came from a cooking kind of family. "My mom, my sister, my father, all of 'em are good cooks. They get in the kitchen and make magic."

Magic indeed. The first afternoon Rayford whipped up

clam chowder, red beans and rice, and fried chicken. The next day it was smothered pork chops and fried catfish. When volunteers and church members asked for recipes — and many of them did — Rayford politely refused.

"I share the Gospel. I share the Good News, but I don't share my cooking secrets," he said.

Elaine Jollay, a disaster relief volunteer from Columbus, Ga., was disappointed she wouldn't be taking Rayford's secrets home with her, but as she ate her fourth piece of fried chicken, she said, "I love those disaster relief volunteers who cook for us, but as long as Johnny's here, I'll be eating with him."

ERLC criticizes Romania

WASHINGTON (BP) — A group of Southern Baptist ethics specialists has called on the Romanian government to heed concerns about potentially restrictive church-state legislation under consideration. The fellows of the Research Institute of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, meeting Sept. 21 in Nashville, adopted a resolution urging the Romanian Senate and other public officials to reconsider the proposed measure in light of objections raised by Baptists in the Eastern European country. The institute's fellows commended to the government a written report from the Christian Baptist Union of Romania on the legislation. The bill has been submitted to the Romanian Senate under an emergency plan, meaning its passage could be imminent, Negrut said in the report. Romania has "never had a history and tradition of separation of church and state," said R. Phillip Roberts, president of Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and former dean of theology at the Institute of Biblical Studies in Oradea, Romania, in 1990-94. There is "probably a fear that they cannot let the churches go," he told Baptist Press. "It actually benefits the government a lot more to take their hands off. For whatever reason, they fail to see the importance of allowing total freedom. Roberts encouraged Southern Baptists to contact their senators and representatives about the religious liberty bill in Romania. Members of Congress may be contacted by phone through the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or by e-mail through the ERLC's website, www.faithandfamily.com.

Looking back

10 years ago

A federal judge in Jackson denied former Mississippi College President Lewis Nobles' request to be released from jail while he awaits a competency hearing.

20 years ago

A campaign by layman C. A. Bozeman of Rolling Fork leads churches in the Sharkey-Issaquena Association to be the first association in the Southern Baptist Convention to report 100% adoption of the new annuity plan for pastors.

50 years ago

First Church, Columbia, votes on and approves a budget which calls for \$100,000, which is the largest budget in the history of the church.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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The Baptist
Record



**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

*Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:*

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eter-
nal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and
rose from the grave to forgive
my sins and to restore my
relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a
loving relationship with Him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.*)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to
become children of God, even to
those who believe in his name."
(John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiri-
tual guidance.*

IN PRAISE AND APPRECIATION OF CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

October 16 is Baptist College Day in Mississippi. In today's society education is viewed as essential, but it is important for us to remember that Christian Education can be eternal. Throughout our entire history as Mississippi Baptists, we have recognized that Christian Education could provide more than just facts, figures, language, and lodging, but it can literally impact the world in the name of Christ for Kingdom causes.

Our three Baptist colleges in Mississippi have survived and served with those spiritual underpinnings and have produced Christian leaders who have not only made a difference in Baptist life, but who have been God's good salt throughout our society. Our Mississippi Baptist colleges have certainly been a personal blessing to me. I enrolled in one of our colleges when I was four years old. Actually, that is how old I was when my dad surrendered to preach and started his college career. They put me in a kindergarten program there at the school. Almost continually from that time I have been involved in and been a part of our colleges. I had brothers that went to our Baptist colleges, kids that attended our schools, and I am thankful to God for a woman from Alabama, who decided to attend a Mississippi Baptist college, that I met, courted, married, and have spent a life with in ministry sharing the journey for the Lord. Christian Education in Mississippi has been a blessing to my life.

As with any institution or organization, leadership makes all the difference. All through the years there have been some great leaders in our



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Baptist schools. At the present time we have three wonderful people serving the Lord as presidents of our schools. They are gifted, personable, and have a deep desire to live their life on mission for Jesus. They are uniquely suited for where God has placed them.

At Blue Mountain College Dr. Bettye R. Coward became the first woman to serve as president of any Baptist college in the Southern Baptist Convention. She brings great vision, unequalled drive, and grace beyond measure to her work. Like the lady in Scripture, who brought help and hope to the people of God, the Lord has brought her to serve for such a time as this.

At Mississippi College Dr. Lee G. Royce is president. Dr. Royce brings to the leadership of that school an unusual and refreshing mixture of brilliance and scholarship coupled with humility and down to earth humanity. To every decision and situation he brings great insight along with a ready smile and often a quick wit. Day by day he leads out of a rock solid, living relationship with Christ.

At William Carey College is Dr. Larry Kennedy, the longest serving of our college presidents. Dr. Kennedy came to that position after a journey in ministry that led him to be pastor, preacher, professor, and president. All along the way the Lord was preparing him for this enormous task of leadership. When Dr. Kennedy came to be president of the school, the institution had a huge debt that seemed insurmountable. Under the guidance of this serious-

minded man, unbelievable things have taken place. The debt will be paid off this year. The enrollment has risen to higher numbers each year and the campus has seen beautiful improvements beyond what anyone would think possible.

It is generally understood that the most difficult professional job anywhere is the position of being a college president. It is impossible to describe all of the challenges and needs that they face day after day. Without writing a commentary on each one, just permit me to walk you through some of the areas that repeatedly must receive their attention. There is the faculty that must be recruited, encouraged, directed, and cared for as they teach and train in the institution. There are the students that come from all kinds of family settings who have personal needs, different personalities, and multiple dreams about life. There are the alumni who are filled with emotions about the school and ideas about how things ought to be done. There are the facilities, classroom buildings, dorms, food services, parking problems, sports, and all of the academic issues. Some are related to the accrediting agencies and others are related to the students keeping their grades to a high level of proficiency. Then add to all of this the deep concern that they have for the spiritual welfare of the students who come their way. For ultimately what would it matter if someone came to one of our schools and graduated knowing everything about everything but not knowing Jesus?

To all of these concerns, add one other and that is the ongoing need for faithful financial support that makes it possible for Christian academic institutions to survive. Our presidents are not just glorified fundraisers, but it is without question that they need our ongoing gracious financial support in order to provide the best possible environment for learning in a Christian setting. Annually when the state legislature gathers, discusses, and debates providing funding with tax money for our state colleges and universities, our three Baptist colleges are not recipients of those dollars. Beyond tuition their resources come from friends, supporters, and the cooperative giving of Mississippi Baptists. You can be a blessing and an encouragement to the entire work through a special gift, possibly including one of our schools in your will, and your faithful continued giving through the Cooperative Program. You make a difference!

It is the students for whom the schools exist. Fine buildings, gifted faculty, outstanding presidents, and solid Christian values mean nothing if there is no one there to learn. While every young person who is contemplating going to college may not feel that one of our three Baptist schools is where they ought to be, they should at least be exposed to the possibilities of what God may be able to do for them and through them at one of our colleges. You can be used of the Lord to influence and help them know the options that are theirs. If you have a question or need help in some way in giving direction to a young person, please feel free to call any of our schools. They stand ready to respond and give help if at all possible.

*The author may be contacted at
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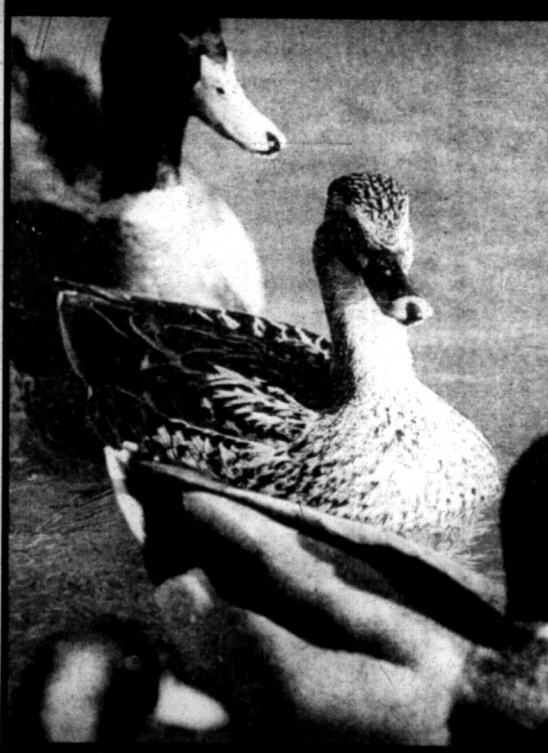
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DFU 09/10/05

Are Your Ducks In a Row?



Regarding your Last Will & Testament?

Consumer Reports Magazine recently reported that approximately 70% of the more than two million Americans who die annually do not have a valid Last Will and Testament. Research has repeatedly shown that as many as 8 out of 10 Christians do not have a valid Will. In essence these individuals have failed to get their "ducks in a row" regarding their estate plans and philanthropic interests.

Since 1943, the Mississippi Baptist Foundation has assisted individuals in the highly specialized area of charitable estate planning. If you want to get your "ducks in a row" by protecting your loved ones and including a charitable component in your Last Will and Testament, give the Foundation a call at (601) 292-3210.

MBF

THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Gates ordination, Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County

1. Justin Gates was licensed to preach the gospel by **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County**. Shown are pastor Tommy Inmon and Gates.

2. **Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale**, recently held a mission recognition. Shown are the participants.



2. Mission Recognition, Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale

3. **First Church, Leakesville**, ordained J. R. Snyder and Marvin Hicks as deacons. Shown are Dale Younce, interim pastor; Ginger Snyder; Snyder; Hicks; Allah Hicks, and Ricky Dickson.

4. **Corinth Church, Magee**, held a deacon ordination service Aug. 28. Shown are Jay Wesbrooks, Vic Prather, Angie Prather, Laura Williamson, Keith Williamson, Chris Williams, Paula Williams, David McWilliams, Amy McWilliams, Becky Brown, and Michael Brown.

5. **Liberty Church, Liberty**, provided relief efforts to the Amite County area in the aftermath of Katrina. The church became a location for the FEMA workers, out-of-town state troopers, fire departments, the National Guard, and other volunteers, feeding 40-60 people twice a day for 11 days. Shown are some of the workers.



3. Deacon ordination, First Church, Leakesville

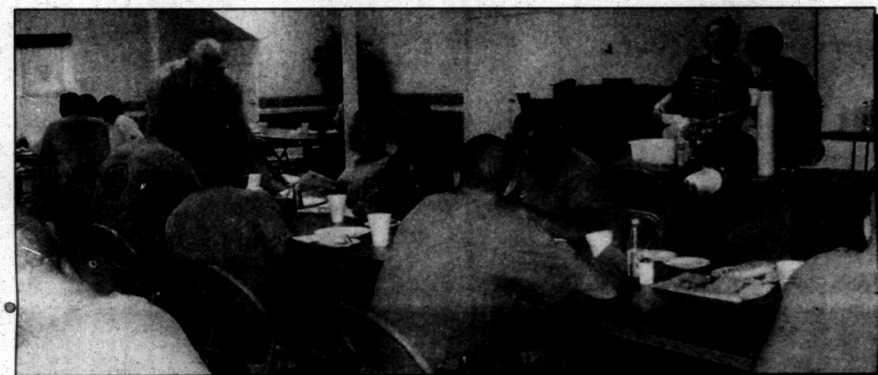
6. **Whitesand Church, Prentiss**, recognizes Bible drill participants Katie Parish and Jay Slater. LeeAnn Stewart is their Bible drill teacher. Shown are Parish and Slater.



6. Parish, Stewart, and Slater, Whitesand Church, Prentiss



4. Deacon ordination, Corinth Church, Magee



5. Relief efforts, Liberty Church, Liberty



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

CLASSIFIED ADS

MS POSITIONS

PLEASANT HILL BAPTIST CHURCH is now accepting resumes for an Associate pastor in music. Please send resume to the following address: Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, associate pastor search committee, 1383 Pleasant Hill Road, Columbus, MS 39702.

ENON BAPTIST CHURCH, Grenada, Miss., is seeking bi-vocational part-time music director. Please send resumes to Enon Baptist Church, 2604 Carrollton Road, Grenada, MS 38901. Or contact church office at (662) 226-0778, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Other times, call Fletcher Moorman at (662) 417-8253.

PAID NURSERY WORKER needed for Wednesday and Sunday worship services. Please call (601) 854-8809, Pelahatchie Baptist Church, P.O. Box 355, Pelahatchie, MS 39145.

FIRST CHURCH, GLUCKSTADT, Miss., seeking a music minister for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights only. Blended worship, free-flowing format. Contact Author Comans at (601) 209-6000 or email authorcomans@aol.com.

MINISTER OF YOUTH: GOSS BAPTIST CHURCH, near Columbia, Miss., is seeking part-time/bi-vocational minister

of youth. Please send resumes to Goss Baptist Church, attn: Donovan McComb at 718 Broad Street, Columbia, MS 39429 or contact him at (601) 444-0000. **HARRISBURG BAPTIST CHURCH, TUPELO, MISS.**, (Lee County) is accepting resumes for Director of childhood education to provide leadership for ministry to children in grades 1-6. Resumes should be mailed to Mr. Gary Waters, committee chairman, 506 Lake Park Drive, Tupelo, MS 38801.

WALKER HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Brandon, Miss., is prayerfully seeking a minister of music and a piano player. Please send resumes to Walker Hill Baptist Church, 1100 Wade Patrick Road, Brandon, MS 39042.

NEEDED: INTERIM MINISTER OF MUSIC, Hattiesburg, Miss. Send resume to Immanuel Baptist Church, 510 Weathersby Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH: Center Hill Baptist Church, Hamilton, Mississippi. Resumes are being accepted for a full-time minister of music/youth. Send resumes to Center Hill Baptist Church, c/o music/youth search committee, P.O. Box 59, Hamilton, MS 39746.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MILLINGTON, TENN., suburb of Memphis, is accepting resumes for minister of recreation. Applicants must have a college degree and at least 3 years experience in church averaging 1500 in Sunday School. Email resumes r-ray@fbc-millington.org or send to Rob Ray, First Baptist Church, 5010 West Union Road, Millington, TN 38053.

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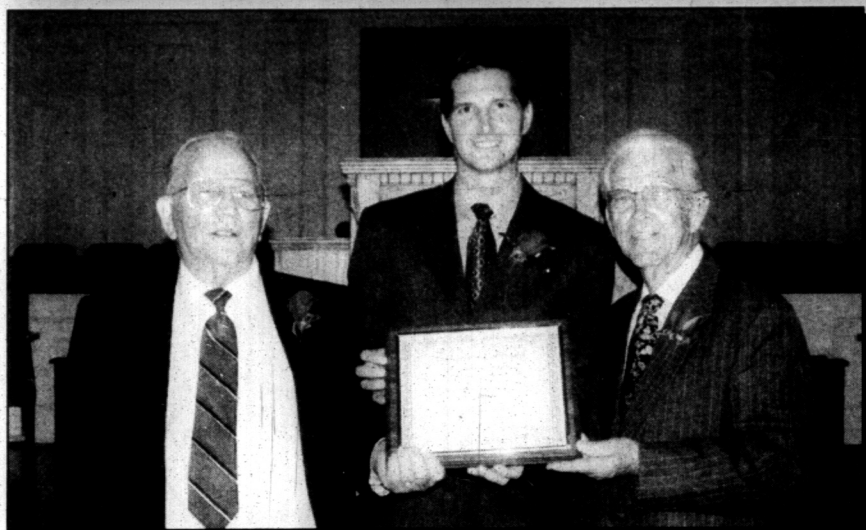
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MYANI-NEY

Clue: M = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Revelation Two: Eleven.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



7. 100th anniversary, Midway Church, Meridian

7. **Midway Church, Meridian** celebrated their 100th anniversary Sept. 17-18. Former members now serving in ministry shared testimonies, as did former staff. Shown is Olyn Roberts, former pastor; Keith Grubbs, pastor; and Bill Webb, pastor emeritus.

cottages of the Baptist Children's Village, and also provided coffee pots and fry daddies. Shown are the participants.

11. **First Church, Columbia**, recognizes its Acteens. Shown are the participants.

12. The **Providentials Quartet, McComb**, will be in concert Oct. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at **Cruger Church, Cruger**. A love offering will be received.

13. **Strong Hope Church, Wesson**, is sponsoring Todd Agnew, Starfield, and Inhabited in concert Oct. 23, 6 p.m., at the Rea Auditorium, Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Wesson. Advance and group tickets are \$12; tickets at the door are \$15. Tickets are available at Wizard Electronics, LifeWay, and Family Christian Stores. For more information, call (601) 695-0420.

14. **First Church, Terry**, gave an offering of \$1,858 to support the developing ministry of the Son Valley Baptist Home for the Mentally Retarded, being developed on an 80-acre site in Madison County.

8. **Acteens of Evergreen Church, Louisville**, presented the ladies of WMU with a certificate for 50+ years of service. Also, the Acteens had a commencement Sept. 14 where each girl received certificates of accomplishment for community service and mission projects. Shown are the participants.

9. The WMU of **Chunky Church, Newton County**, held a Super Model show featuring the characters of women of the Bible and one contemporary missionary. Shown, front row, are Cherry Dean, Mattie Jane Davis, Johnnie Jean Luke, Margaret Gressett, and JoAnne Miller; back row, Lodena Blalock, Jean Daniels, Bobbye Stevenson, and Marie Gilbert.

10. **Women on Mission of East Columbia Church, Columbia**, made 24 aprons for the



8. Acteens recognition, Evergreen Church, Louisville



8. Acteens honor WMU, Evergreen Church, Louisville



9. WMU, Chunky Church, Newton County



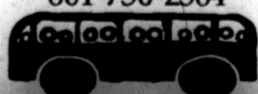
10. Women on Mission, East Columbia Church, Columbia



11. Acteens recognition, First Church, Columbia

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



15. Noteburning ceremony, First Church, Lake



16. Children's recognition, Hope Church, Neshoba County

15. **First Church, Lake**, held a note burning on Sept. 11, celebrating the payoff of their sanctuary note. Shown are Lewis Wooten, pastor Ken McLemore, and Ronnie Harvey.

16. **Hope Church, Neshoba County**, held a recognition service Aug. 28 for their Acteens, GA's, and Mission Friends. Shown, back row, are Alicia Harris, Kayla Robinson, and Carrie McLemore; middle row, Mallory Thompson, Ali Pike, Brianna Whittle, and Julie Osborne; front row, Madison Eubanks, Bethany Whittle, and Clair Winstead.

17. **Fellowship Church, Starkville**, sent \$5,000 to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief unit, and approved another \$5,000 to help with the needs of evacuees being housed in Starkville. The money was given in honor of their retired pastor, Cornell Daughtry. Shown are Daughtry, pastor Dustin Stockstill, and Victor Nash.

18. **First Church, Vicksburg**, recognized Lauren McCall, daughter of Dennis and Margaret McCall, missionaries to Tanzania and

granddaughter of pastor emeritus John McCall. Lauren received the John G. McCall Scholarship at Mississippi College, which is awarded to a student majoring in ministry and missions. Shown are John McCall, his wife Vickie, Lauren McCall, and pastor Matt Buckles. Also on Sept. 11, First Baptist held a high attendance day with a total of 530 in Sunday School, their highest attendance since April 2003.

19. John T. Carter was recognized at a recent dinner for serving as Executive Director for the **Fellowship of Baptist Educators** for 18 years. Shown is James A. Keefer, president of the Fellowship, and Carter. Carter had also served as Dean of the School of Education at Samford University.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



17. Donations to Diaster Relief, Fellowship Church, Starkville



18. McCall recognized for scholarship, First Church, Vicksburg



19. Carter recognized by the Fellowship of Baptist Educators

New dean tapped for Graham Sch.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Charles E. Lawless has been chosen to become dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at Southern Seminary (SBTS) in Louisville, Ky.

Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. appointed Lawless, the Graham School's senior associate dean, as its new leader to succeed the school's founding dean, Thom Rainer, who was elected September 12 as the ninth president of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

Rainer was chosen by LifeWay trustees to replace the retiring Jimmy Draper.

Lawless, a native of Cincinnati, has served as senior associate dean of the Billy Graham School since 2002 and has been a member of the faculty since 1996. He is a two-time graduate of Southern Seminary, having completed a master of divinity degree in 1992 and a Ph.D. in 1997.

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OBITUARY

James H. Burrell, 91, died Aug. 20 at his home in Indianola. During his 59 years of ministry in the Mississippi Delta, he pastored several churches, including churches in Belzoni, Inverness, and James Crossing. After retirement, Burrell served as interim in churches throughout Sunflower, Washington, and Holmes Counties. He is survived by his wife Annie Kate Frazier Burrell, Indianola; daughters Barbara and husband Billy W. Sims, Brandon; Dorothy Jewel and husband James C. Barron, Abbeville, La.; Jimmie L. Burrell and husband Frank M. Ornburn, Marietta, Ga.; Jill B. and husband Ressie E. Riddell, Indianola; five grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Services were at Eastwood Church, Indianola, with Billy Thomas, Frank Ornburn, and Allen Bailey officiating.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Ackerman Church, Ackerman: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., Bible study and breakfast, 6:30 a.m.; worship, 7 p.m.; Randall Posse, speaker; Charlie Murphy, music; Danny Irvin, pastor.

Benton Church, Benton: Homecoming and 50th anniversary, Oct. 2, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., including lunch. All former members, staff, friends and family are invited. For information, call (662) 673-9708.

Carey Chapel Church, Red Banks: Homecoming, Oct. 16; worship followed by dinner on the grounds; Charles Boyd, speaker; Carey Chapel Quartet, music; O. E. Langner, Jr., pastor.

Coila Church, Coila: Revival, Oct. 3-5, 7 p.m.; Ed McDaniel, Winona, speaker; Billy Blakeley, pastor.

Concord Church, Pelahatchie: 135th Anniversary, Oct. 2; services at 10 and 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon program of singing and speaking. Former pastors, speaking; Billy McKay, pastor. For more information, call (601) 546-2101.

Crossgates Church, Brandon: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., dinner at 5 p.m. and worship, 6:45 p.m.; Bill Stafford, speaker. For information, call (601) 825-2562.

Damascus Church, Flora: Homecoming, Oct. 9; 9:45 a.m., gospel sing; 11 a.m. worship, followed by dinner on the grounds; Sonny Bradshaw, pastor, speaker; music by locals.

Eastwood Church, Indianola: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.

First Church, Sumrall: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim McNeil, "The Walking Bible," speaking.

Glading Church, Amite County: 100 Year Anniversary, Oct. 2; registration, 9 a.m., program, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground; music service following. Music by Hallelujah. For more information, call (601) 783-3591 or (601) 783-3664.

Good Hope Church, Batesville: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by a pot luck luncheon; Sun.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Courtney Selvy, speaker; David C. Jones, music; Gerald H. Walker, pastor.

Gray's Creek Church, Hernando: Homecoming, Oct. 2; worship and singing, 10:30

a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Bob Maddux, speaker; Chester Beasley, music.

McAdams Church, McAdams: Homecoming, Oct. 9; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. followed by covered dish lunch. Dan West, speaker; Michelle Jones, music; James Young, pastor.

Meadowview Church, Starkville: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 10:15 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Mickey Dalrymple, Columbus, speaker; Ronnie Cottingham, music.

Military Church, Sumrall: Revival, Oct. 9-12; Sun., 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Sonny Adkins, speaker; Ronnie Cottingham, music.

Monument Drive Church, Tupelo: Homecoming, Oct. 2; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by a covered dish lunch; Jimmy Hill, speaker, and family, music.

Mountain Creek Church, Florence: Homecoming and building dedication, Oct. 9; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Frank Smith, speaker; Roland Dear, music.

New Goodhope Church, Pulaski: Homecoming, Oct. 9; 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Paul Smith, speaker; Curtis and LaNita Roland, music.

New Home Church, Fulton: Revival, Oct. 2-5, 7 p.m.; Andy Bryan, Headland, Ala., speaker and music.

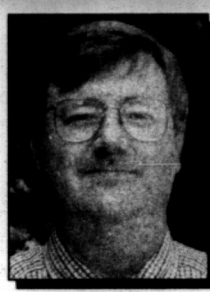
New Hope Church, Foxworth: Homecoming, Oct. 2; worship, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Tommy King, speaker; Brad Day, morning service music and DayStar, evening service music. Tim Parker, pastor.

Ramah Church, McCall Creek: Revival, Oct. 9-12; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m., followed by covered dish supper; David Moree, speaker; Jamall Badry, music; Gordon Coker, pastor.

Spring Hill Church, Waterford: Homecoming, Oct. 9; music, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by potluck luncheon; Larry West, speaker; Bobby McKay, pastor.

Woodville Church, Woodville: Revival, Oct. 2-5; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 11:45 and 6:30 p.m.; lunch on weekdays, potluck supper Wed. at 5:30 p.m. Billy Smith, Madison, speaker; Ken Mann, Tampa, Fla., music. For more information, call (601) 888-3613.

COLLEGE NEWS



Everett

1. James Everett, associate professor of English and director of Graduate studies in the English department since 1996, has been chosen as the Arts & Sciences Distinguished Lecturer for 2005-2006. Everett's lecture is entitled "High Compassion" and Favorite Lines: Making Connections in a Disconnected World. The program will be held on Tuesday, October 25 at 7 p.m. in Provine Chapel on the MC campus. A reception will follow in Alumni Hall.

2. The Mississippi College School of Nursing is spearheading an effort to help

William Carey College School of Nursing students that were displaced or materially affected by Hurricane Katrina. The nursing school at MC will collect items from students, faculty/staff and the community to prepare gift bags for students at William Carey. If you would like to donate items, money or need more information, please contact Mary Jean Padgett (Padgett@mc.edu), Jo Sistrunk (Sistrunk00@mc.edu) or Marilyn Brantley (Brantley@mc.edu) at the MC School of Nursing 601.925.3837. Items can be turned in until Friday, October 7.

3. Mississippi College Department of English has announced that Paul Ruffin, noted novelist, short story writer and essayist will return to the MC campus on October 4 for a special "master class" for creative writing students and an evening reading of his works. Ruffin, who has read at Mississippi College twice before, will conduct the master class on creative non-fiction in the afternoon and will read from his most recent works at 7:00 p.m., October 4, in Provine Chapel on the campus of Mississippi College. A reception for Ruffin will follow.

GuideStone sets disaster programs

DALLAS (BP) — Immediate assistance to GuideStone Financial Resources participants and eligible churches in areas destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Katrina has been put in place by the Southern Baptist Convention entity's staff.

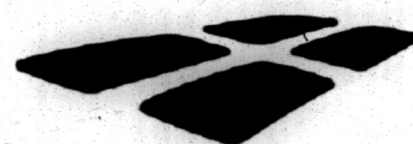
"Our hearts and minds are focused these days on all our Southern Baptist churches, associations, our New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary family and, in fact, our entire Southern Baptist family in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said. "We have developed some tangible solutions how we can be Christ's hand extended to our participants during these difficult days."

Disaster victims eligible for assistance need to reside in an "Individual Assistance" area as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and have confirmation of need from their respective state Baptist convention. FEMA has designated 31 Louisiana parishes, 47 Mississippi counties, and seven Alabama counties as Individual Assistance areas.

Continuation of the retirement plan protection benefits (up to \$100,000 in survivor benefits and up to \$500 per month in disability benefits) will be made available by GuideStone, and the SBC entity will waive the requirement that retirement contributions must be in continuous months. The IRS has just announced that some relief also will be available for participants who have outstanding plan loans.

GuideStone will assist eligible life and health plan participants who are unable to make their monthly payments for coverage. Up to three months of premiums may be waived for those churches that are not receiving regular offerings or are unable to provide compensation for their pastor and staff. Current life and health plan participants should contact their respective state Baptist convention to request assistance from GuideStone with their life and health premiums. The state Baptist conventions will then confirm the need to GuideStone.

Eligible churches that lose their life and health coverage with another carrier as a result of this disaster will receive an expedited application process to



GuideStone
FINANCIAL RESOURCES
of the Southern Baptist Convention

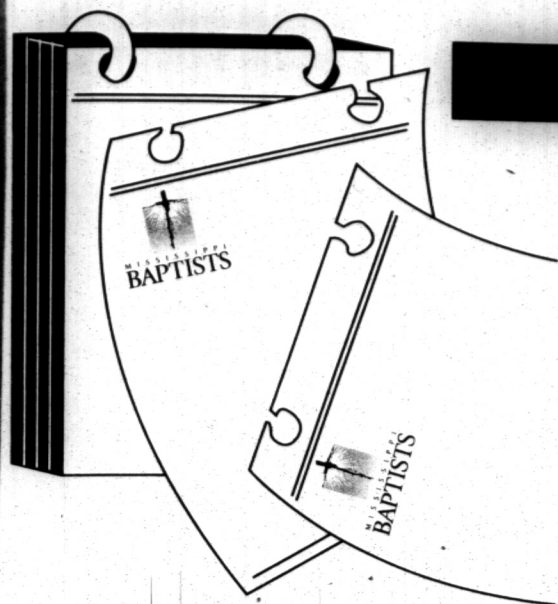
provide coverage for their employees. Evidence of insurability and normal underwriting will apply for most plans. However, GuideStone's Health Limited Plan does not require underwriting and can be effective immediately. This plan provides up to \$2,000 in healthcare coverage and access to significant discounts on medical and pharmacy benefits.

Participants who may need to leave a GuideStone medical plan during the 12 months following Hurricane Katrina will be able to reapply to GuideStone plans without underwriting, provided they apply no later than Sept. 1, 2007.

GuideStone has been working with its vendors to reach out to Katrina victims. Many vendors, including Highmark, Medco, Humana (Louisiana HMO) and GuideOne, have modified their requirements to assist GuideStone participants affected by Katrina. Highmark and Humana will treat out-of-network claims as in-network through Oct. 31. Medco has enabled an immediate one-time retail prescription without co-pay on behalf for all prescriptions for GuideStone participants in the affected areas. GuideOne has implemented a grace period during which customers in impacted areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama will not be canceled for nonpayment of premium.

"Our vendors have once again provided great service and have come through for our participants in a time of disaster," Hawkins said. "We are thankful for their help during these days."

The GuideStone customer relations team can answer participants' questions and explain what assistance is available. Participants should call (800) 262-0511 between 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Standard Time.



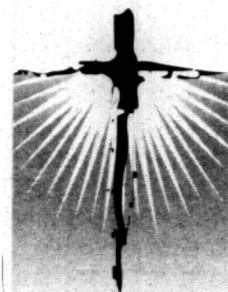
The following list contains updated information on events. More events will be added to this list as soon as the information becomes available.

- **4 Senior Adult Conference**
Discipleship & Family Ministry
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Sept. 27–Sept. 29, **Cancelled**
- **National Missions Weekender (Training Conference)**
Woman's Missionary Union
Lifeway Ridgecrest Conference Center,
Ridgecrest, NC, Sept. 27–Oct. 2
As scheduled; Bus trips from Mississippi have been cancelled.
- **Special Ministries Retreat**
Sunday School
Camp Garaywa
Sept. 30–Oct. 1, **Cancelled**
- **Church Library Ministry Conference**
Communication Services
First Baptist Church, Brookhaven
Oct. 7–Oct. 8, **Cancelled**

EVENT STATUS UPDATES

- **RA Day**
Men's Ministry, Mississippi College
Oct. 8, **Cancelled**
- **State Literacy Missions Workshop**
Woman's Missionary Union
Camp Garaywa
Oct. 13–Oct. 15, **Postponed**
Rescheduled as three separate events on Oct. 13–Oct. 15, Oct. 14–Oct. 15, and Nov. 3–Nov. 5, 2005.
- **Flake's Formula for the Future – Biloxi**
Sunday School
First Baptist Church, Biloxi
Oct. 21–Oct. 22, **Cancelled**
- **Missions Mobilization Celebration Banquet**
Missions Mobilization
First Baptist Church, Jackson
Nov. 11, **Cancelled**

- **Missions Mobilization Conferences**
Missions Mobilization
Baptist Building Skyroom, Jackson
Nov. 12, **Cancelled**



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Tennessee church stirring baptistery waters — often

GALLATIN, Tenn. (BP) — Although more than 10,000 Southern Baptist churches didn't baptize a single person last year, there's no real secret to seeing new believers stir the waters of the baptistery, says a pastor who baptized 29 people on a recent Sunday evening.

When people have "experienced the power of the Gospel personally ... they want to share that with others," said Jeff LaBorg of College Heights Church in Gallatin, Tenn.

New believers, he noted, are the fruit of soul-winning by church members who "love the Word of God and have been taught by exposition and example from their leaders that soul-winning is a requirement and not an elective."

College Heights members "love everybody that comes through the door, regardless of appearance, affluence, or economic status," the pastor said. "On Sunday, they flood the altar with tears and intercession, and then they go out and pursue the very ones they have been praying for. They are bold about sharing their own testimonies of how Christ changed their lives."

For example, church members recently discovered a family who had moved to the area to work in the booming construction industry, but heavy rains had delayed the work. They had spent all their resources and were living in a tent in a local campground. The church family ministered to their needs and shared the Good News of God's love, LaBorg said.

"Today that family has a home, a job and, most importantly, a family of faith..."

Don't be reluctant

LaBorg urged believers not to be reluctant to witness to people.

"People are hungry for truth — unapologetic truth that sets the captive free and doesn't merely offer a mask to cover the misery," he said. "The unchurched are weary of the standard religious answers that ignore the real issues, and they are willing to pay the price — if only someone will tell them the truth."

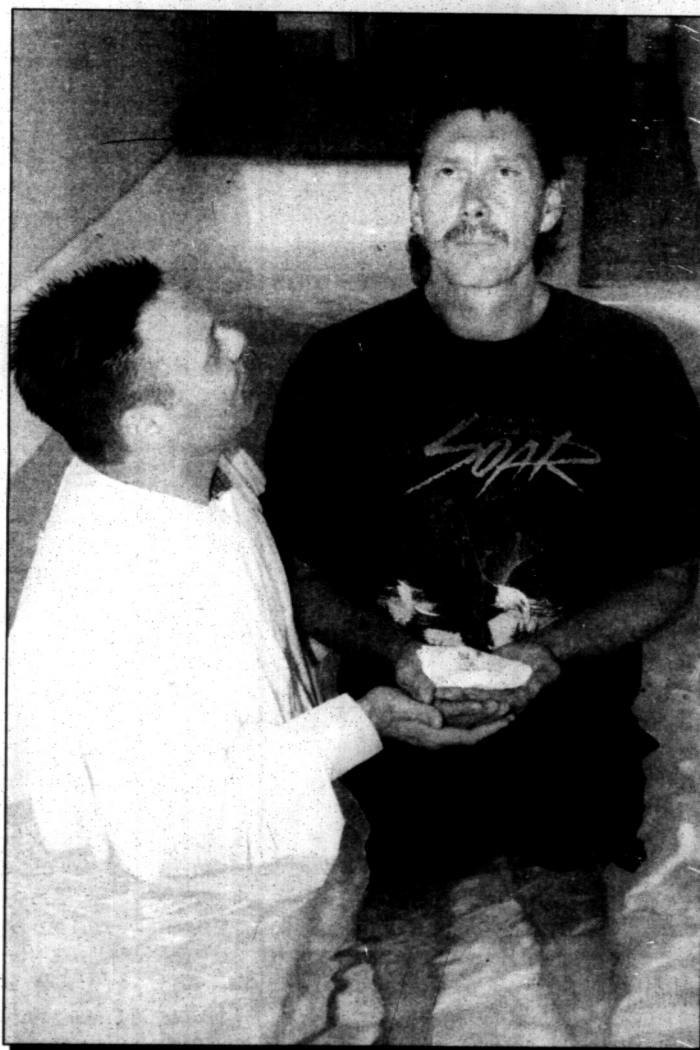
For London Smith, it only took a friend's invitation to lead him toward the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Smith was one of the young men baptized at College Heights on Aug. 28.

"I was raised in church and made a decision at age 12, but it was just routine. I wasn't saved," said Smith, a 20-year-old employee of Dell Computer Corp. "I had been into a lot of bad stuff that I'm not proud of — drugs, drinking, getting mad over small things. When a friend invited me to come here, I instantly felt the power. My life has turned around 180 degrees the other way. It's amazing."

At a dead end

Frank Boone, a 42-year-old landscaper from Gallatin, was baptized that evening because he had experienced Christ's power to change a life in trouble.

"I used to drink a lot, going to bars, picking fights, using pot and cocaine. I ruined my life," Boone confessed. "I wasn't thinking about my kids. I was a poor excuse for a dad. I brought misery to everyone around



SOARING WITH JESUS — Frank Boone, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the word "Soar," takes a heavenward glance before being baptized by pastor Jeff LaBorg of College Heights Church in Gallatin, Tn. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

me. The Lord had been knocking on my door for a long time. I knew it, but I thought, 'Why try being a Christian when I know I'm not going to commit to it?'

Then, in mid-August, Boone finally understood he was at a dead end. "I was on my way home — it's about an hour's walk — and I was drunk," he recounted. "It was hot and I was sweating. I had blisters on my feet and Christ was talking to me the whole way."

Tears welled up in his eyes as he relived the experience.

"I stopped at a bridge and sat down. I told Christ, 'Lord, I can't do it on my own. I've tried all my life and I've done nothing but cause misery and pain for myself and my family. I'm ready. I'll give up everything. I want a new life. I want my kids to hug me and tell me they love me and be proud of me.'

"Now, it's not what can God do for me; it's what can I do for Him," Boone said, his face breaking into a

wide smile. "He gave His Son up for me. I couldn't do that. I just praise God for not giving up on me, even with all the disrespect I've shown Him over the years."

Incomparable joy

Nothing compares to the experience of leading someone to Christ, LaBorg said.

"When I look into their eyes and see a peace that words cannot explain — where only a short time before there was fear and confusion — I am filled with the awe of God's miracle of regeneration," the pastor said.

That's a joy too many Christians are missing out on, when more than 10,000 Southern Baptist churches don't baptize anyone, LaBorg said.

"Evangelism is simply introducing people to the Lord and sharing the relationship that has forever changed your life and altered your destiny," he said. "When we have experienced the power of the Gospel personally, we want to share that with others. The more we love Jesus, the more natural it becomes for us to share our faith."

"As we grow in love for Jesus, His passions become our passions. Just as He loves sinners and seeks the lost, we follow His example. If we don't exhibit the characteristics of our Father, then something is wrong."

By word and example

"Pastors must show their people by example and from God's Word that soul-winning isn't optional," LaBorg continued.

"This church's founding pastor, Larry Gilmore, is now leader of the evangelism strategies group for Tennessee Baptists," he said. "He taught them by exposition and example that soul-winning is a requirement and not an elective."

"The pastor is key. Pastors have to set the evangelistic example by prioritizing evangelism in the life of the church by returning to soul-winning/training, evangelistic rallies, intentional evangelistic outreach."

"With so many Americans experiencing turmoil and uncertainty, sharing the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ is an urgent priority," LaBorg said.

"This is the day of salvation. There has never been a greater opportunity to mobilize the church with the Gospel than right now," he said. "As the backdrop of natural disasters and economic upheaval grows darker, we could not be in a greater position to let our light so shine that the whole world would see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven."

"It is time for those at ease in Zion to awaken and behold the incredible opportunity we have to rescue the perishing."

Editor's note: Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch has challenged Southern Baptist churches to baptize one million new believers in the coming year and has called on their 1,188 local associations to hold two "associational baptism rallies" between Oct. 1 of this year and Sept. 30, 2006. Information and resources about "The 'Everyone Can' Kingdom Challenge!" are available on the Internet at <http://www.everyonecan.net>.

CP report issued with number of recommendations

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Bobby Welch is applauding a task force report that calls for greater Cooperative Program support from leaders throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

The report was released Sept. 17 by the Task Force on Cooperation, an eight-member group that included four SBC entity heads and four state convention executives. It issued 13 recommendations, with the goal of boosting Cooperative Program giving and improving cooperation between the national and state conventions.

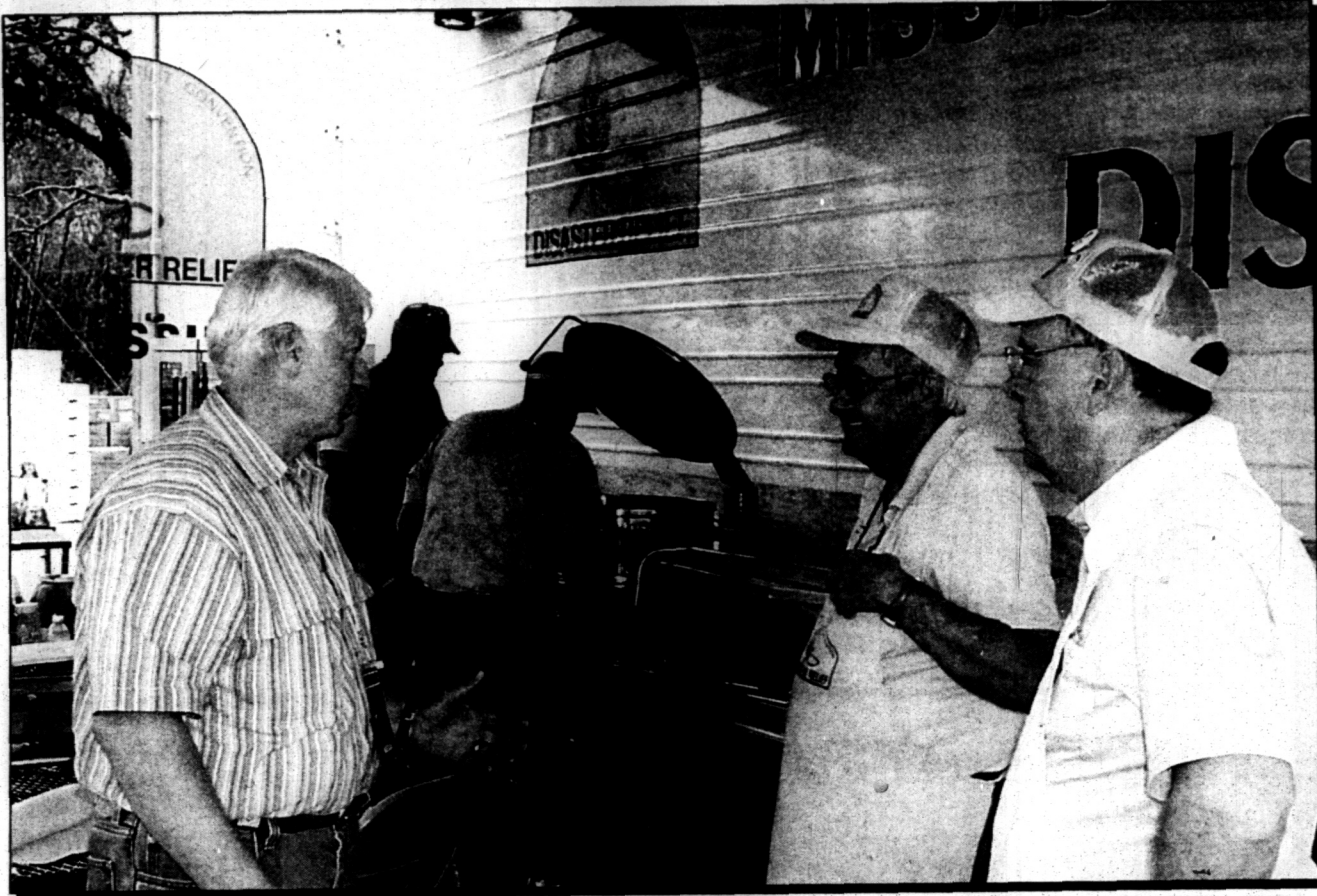
"Never before has the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention — from entity heads down to every Sunday School teacher and pastor — needed to sound the call for evangelism and the Cooperative Program," Welch told Baptist Press. "Everybody can appreciate the heartfelt and clear message of the task force — that leadership should lead the way, in both going and giving."

Southern Baptists have been widely praised for their involvement in the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief, with more than 5,000 volunteers spread throughout the region — but what many Southern Baptists fail to recognize, Welch said, is that Cooperative Program dollars provided the "infrastructure" that allowed Southern Baptist disaster relief teams to be on the ground immediately after the storm. Because of the funding stability provided by the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists can respond quickly and comprehensively in times of disaster and not undercut the deployment of missionaries overseas and at home, and not turn away a single student from SBC seminaries, he added.

"In my view, we're at one of our greatest points of destiny and have before us the greatest opportunity," he said. "However, everything hinges on unity of purpose... We must now accelerate not only the going but the giving, in light of all the need that is now apparent by the disasters and likely those that lie ahead."

Founded in 1925, the Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Each time someone gives to a CP-cooperating church, a portion of the money goes to the state (or regional) convention, which then forwards a portion to the Southern Baptist Convention. Contributions received for national SBC entities are distributed according to the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

In recent years, Cooperative Program giving has been stagnant and has struggled to keep up with inflation. In 2003, the



FEEDING THE HUNGRY — Bobby Welch (left) president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Church, Daytona Beach, Fla., talks with Bobby Kennedy (second from right), a member of Pearl Valley Church, Wesson, and Jason Simpson, a member of First Church, Eupora, at the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's mass feeding unit at First Church, Biloxi. Welch toured the devastated Mississippi Gulf Coast days after Hurricane Katrina passed through the area. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

International Mission Board and North American Mission Board — both of which receive CP funds — cut their respective budgets, preventing new missionaries from being assigned to the field.

The task force's report said the problem is multi-fold. One problem, according to the report, is the portion that churches are forwarding through the Cooperative Program. In 1984, churches forwarded an average of 10.6% of their offerings through CP, although today that number is only 6.64%, the report said.

"If that trend continues, it's not going to be many more years until the Southern Baptist Convention and all of our work is just a whimper of what it is and has been," Carlisle Driggers, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and a member of the task force, told BP.

A lack of leadership, the report said, is at least partly to blame for the drop in support from churches.

"[T]oo many top Southern Baptist Convention leaders and officials for too many years gave scant attention or support to the Cooperative Program as they discharged their responsibilities," the report says. "It is well known that a number of our leaders in the past generation hardly ever spoke about the Cooperative Program or promoted it in one way or another."

"For the most part, their churches were poor models of Cooperative Program support. As a result, it has been projected that thousands of pastors

and churches reduced their Cooperative Program percentage of undesignated monies as they followed the example of those who led them.

"For sure, this reality has hurt the Cooperative Program as much as anything and has been discouraging and regrettable. About that point, there yet remains a huge amount of disappointment, mistrust and even raw emotions which need to be recognized, addressed, and reconciled all across the Southern Baptist Convention."

Echoing the report, Driggers said SBC leaders — both state and national — should lead their churches to give "10% of their undesignated monies" through the Cooperative Program.

"It's just a fact of life that people follow good models of leadership," he said. "You'll always look up to good leaders."

Another task force member, J. Robert White, said the Cooperative Program worked so well for so long "that we took it for granted." White serves as executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

"We believed that it would continue to bear fruit without tending to the need to educate each new generation regarding its importance to all that we do," White told Baptist Press in an e-mail. "This blasé attitude about the Cooperative Program began to be revealed through the election of SBC leadership who pastored churches with exceedingly low levels of Cooperative Program support."

"Add to that the rarity of any verbal support for the Cooperative Program from SBC

leadership, and the concept of CP Lite became prevalent. With the Cooperative Program dollar shrinking at a frightening rate, we are finally awakening from our slumber to recognize that if this trend continues we will no longer have a Southern Baptist Convention as we know it."

The solution, White said, is to "re-educate" Southern Baptists about the necessity of the Cooperative Program, to elect leaders who are "excellent models" of CP support and to train seminary students about the importance of the Cooperative Program.

In an effort to assist in training seminary students — as well as to educate laypeople — Chad Brand and David E. Hankins have coauthored a book, *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists*. It will be released by Broadman & Holman in May 2006.

"We must have a unison voice of support for the Cooperative Program from all of our national leaders," White said.

The task force's report included more than a dozen recommendations:

- People "elected to Southern Baptist Convention positions of leadership" should come from "strong Cooperative Program churches" and should be "well-known advocates themselves of Cooperative Program commitment."

- Every elected SBC and state convention leader "should promote the Cooperative Program" with "vigor and intentionality on a consistent basis."

- The Cooperative Program should "be placed at the top of every agenda" during SBC annual meetings and state convention meetings. CP also should be a top priority for "various state and national entities that receive Cooperative Program funds."

- The International Mission Board and North American Mission Board should promote the Cooperative Program "as vigorously" as they promote, respectively, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

- "Every effort" must be made to "incorporate a renewed call to biblical stewardship and the Cooperative Program" as a "vital link in support of the invitation of Jesus to live out His Kingdom principles."

- The state conventions and the SBC Executive Committee must join together to provide leadership for "Cooperative Program promotions and expansion." "We simply must come together for these uncertain times and for the years ahead."

- Southern Baptists should be taught "to practice the biblical standard" of tithing.

- Southern Baptist churches should send "at least a tithe of undesignated receipts" to mission causes through the Cooperative Program.

- "Every avenue" must "be explored" to educate Southern Baptists — particularly those age 40 and younger — about the Cooperative Program.

- SBC and state convention leaders must agree upon "a single-focused, simple to understand" strategy for Cooperative Program advancement. "[T]hat strategy must be built on identifying the strengths of the Cooperative Program and adding to those strengths while not giving so much time and attention to what is wrong with the Cooperative Program."

- SBC entities must not pursue "financial mission support in a societal approach," that is, by seeking donations directly from churches outside of the Cooperative Program framework. "This practice is the polar opposite to the Cooperative Program and will mean the death of Southern Baptists as we have existed, especially since 1925."

- As CP giving increases in churches, state conventions "must be challenged" to move toward a 50/50 distribution of Cooperative Program funds — that is, keeping 50% of CP funds while forwarding 50% to the national body.

- SBC leaders must help the state conventions "encourage the churches, especially high profile churches, to give greater support" to the Cooperative Program.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Understand God's Eternal Plan

Ephesians 1:1-14



Ivy

While the universities in our nation proudly proclaim the theory of evolution as fact, it is clear to the observant eye that the devolution of man, rather than the evolution of man is the reality. We live in a sinful world that seems to devolve by the minute. Is God doing anything about this unholy world? Absolutely! God is doing a work of holiness that is intended to infiltrate the unholy-ness around us. This work of holiness is threefold according to Ephesians 1. There is the work of:

I. The Sovereign v. 1-6

This passage of scripture speaks of the complicated concept of divine election. The idea of election has been both proclaimed proudly and preached against. It has been debated for centuries by some of the most

godly and knowledgeable people of history and has yet to be satisfactorily settled. I would never be so prideful as to imply that I could settle the debate today, but I can share what the Scriptures say.

Paul clearly taught that God, in His eternal plan, predestined a people to be holy and blameless in His sight. The phrase at the end of verse four, "in love," actually is at the beginning of verse five in the original text. It reads, "In love he predestined us to be adopted into His heavenly family." This explains that the divine motive of election is not exclusion, but loving inclusion. The Scriptures are filled with examples of divine election (Matt 11:27; Matt 20:15-16; Mark 13:27; John 6:44; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29; 2 Thess 2:13). On the other

hand, the Scriptures are filled with illustrations of man's freedom to choose (Matt 3:1-2; Deut 30:19; Josh 24:15; John 5:40; Acts 7:51). God has elected us from before the foundation of the world as part of His work in an unholy world, however God's election does not operate apart from or nullify mankind's responsibility to choose Him.

II. The Savior v. 7-12

What is the Savior doing in this unholy world? First, He is purchasing (v. 7a) or redeeming the lost. Redemption refers to paying a ransom to redeem one from bondage or prison. Christ's death on the cross paid the price for and redeemed us from our sins. Christ is also pardoning (v. 7b). The Scriptures testify to the forgiveness that is available in Christ (Ps 103:12; Isa 1:18; Jer 31:34). Thirdly, the Savior is publicizing (v. 9). He has publicized the mystery of His will. Mystery implies some-

thing that has not been made clear before. The Old Testament saints were saved by looking forward in faith to a Messiah they did not clearly see or understand. We are saved by looking back in faith to the Messiah that has been made known to us through the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and through the writings found in the New Testament. Finally, the Savior is promising (v. 10-12) to gather us together at the end of time and give us an inheritance for the glory of God.

III. The Spirit v. 13-14

What is the Spirit doing in this unholy world? Paul taught that all who receive salvation are sealed with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit seals believers with the seal of security. In Jeremiah 32:9-10 Jeremiah purchased a field, and to secure the transaction, sealed the deed for the field. If we have been born again the Spirit has sealed us and secured us as eternally belonging to the Father. He is also sealing believers with the seal of sincerity.

When an Old Testament king sealed a proclamation with his seal, it conveyed the authenticity of the proclamation. We have been made true children of God and have been sealed with the seal of sincerity or authenticity. Finally, the Spirit is sealing believers with the seal of strength. In Daniel 6:17, King Darius had a stone brought and laid on the mouth of the lion's den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Since the king's seal was present, the decision was final. The seal of the king carried power and strength. If the Holy Spirit has sealed us, our standing with Christ is final and no one is strong enough to break that seal!

Is God doing anything in this unholy world? Absolutely! The Sovereign, the Savior, and the Spirit are working together. The Triune God is diligently doing a holy work in an unholy world. The question is, are you and I joining Him in that work?

Ivy is pastor of Fairfield Church, Moselle.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

"Are You Saved?"

Romans 3:21-28, 4:1-2, 18-25



Davis

The pastor was preaching on Sunday morning. I was sitting with a friend. I don't remember what the sermon was about, but I felt that he was preaching to me that day. During the invitation, I went to kneel at the altar. My Sunday School teacher came and put her arm around me. We talked and prayed. I told Jesus I wanted to follow Him. I knew that I wanted to serve Him for the rest of my life. That's how important salvation is to me.

1. Salvation: God Offers It (Rom. 3:21-26) — We are always discovering new things. A newborn... his mother's scent. A preschooler... things she's able to accomplish. A child... the wonders God made in His world. Often, during these years, children discover God's best gift — forgiveness. That is salvation.

Acts 16:31 says we must "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we will be saved." Salvation is an act of grace from the infinite love of God, through Christ's death on the cross to pay the price for our sins. That's redemption, too.

Once, we were under the law, but the death of God's Son gave His grace for all people. We all probably use Rom. 3:23 when witnessing to those who are lost. No one is eliminated; all have sinned. But, through God's forgiveness, we "are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3:24) I like what I heard Rev. Billy Graham say: "Justified is just-as-if-I'd never sinned!" Redemption is a word of the slave market. A person who is

saved is bought with a price; the death and resurrection of Christ.

In studying verse twenty-five, I had to do some deep research on the word "propitiation." The definition I found was that of "expiation." Not a big help in my vocabulary list. Both words are terms that

Christian theologians use to explain the meaning of Christ's death on the cross as it relates to God and to believers. Both propitiation and expiation are related to the word "reconciliation," since it is through Christ's death on the cross for our sins that we are reconciled to a loving God. (Rom. 5:9-11) Look at 1 John 2:2: "And, He, Jesus Christ, is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Most Bible translations use the word "mercy" to define the meaning of verse twenty-five.

Since Jesus was presented by God to demonstrate His righteousness, those who have faith in Jesus Christ are also declared righteous. (v. 26)

2. Salvation: We Cannot Brag About It (Rom. 3:27-28, 4:1-2) — I'm glad we don't have to earn our salvation by personal acts of kindness and faithful work for the Lord. I could never do enough to brag about it. Not even Abraham, the great patriarch, could boast of his deeds. "For by grace are ye saved by faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) Faith is the central concept of salvation. That means we have a personal trust in God through His Son, Jesus. Heb. 11:6 KJV helps to clarify the importance of faith: "But it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In Gen. 15:6, Abraham was declared righteous by his faith. Rom. 4:2 makes a profound statement about Abraham. "If" Abraham was justified by works, then he has something to brag about. But not Abraham nor anyone living today has a right to brag about what they've done before God.

3. Salvation: We Receive It By Faith (Rom. 4:18-25) — God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. (Gen. 17:4) Abraham believed him, and gave the glory to God. Abraham received the blessing. When God told Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, to a specific area unknown to Abraham, and offer the son he loved for a burnt offering to God, Abraham made preparation and obeyed God. That took faith. When Isaac questioned his father about the lamb for the offering, again Abraham expressed his faith in God to provide the lamb. (Gen. 22:1-8) No wonder we are awed by Abraham's simple faith in God's words that justified him. The kind of faith Abraham had was the kind of faith Paul was calling for. You must know it takes: Faith, not works, grace, not the law, resurrection power, not human efforts when you confront the true living God. Salvation is free. The directions for obtaining it are found in John 3:16.

Davis is a member of First Church, McComb.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Hard-hit Miss. area served by Baptist relief volunteers

By Bruce Mundell
Disaster relief volunteer

TYLERTOWN, Miss. (BP) — Rose limped along, drawing security from her cane. Suffering from serious arthritis along with a long list of other ailments — and being recently widowed — she might have reason to be disgruntled, especially amid the aftermath of one of the most vicious hurricanes ever to make landfall in America.

Instead, she was excited. She was on a disaster relief feeding unit team from her Southern Baptist church in Michigan, preparing several thousand meals a day for a community left without power, without phones, and without the means to care for itself.

They needed her and she felt their need. Her story is an illustration of the passion possessed by Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers.

I couldn't help but notice, traveling from Atlanta into Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina, the constant caravan of water-laden pickup trucks and trailers, multiple loads of generators, and an endless parade of power company trucks descending from the north.

I also saw cars with Louisiana tags packed to the hilt with personal belongings, still looking for a place to rest. I tried to place myself in their situation. What would I do if I were given a few hours to pack all that I think I'll need to get out of the storm's path, never thinking that I won't be able to return and resume life as normal.

What a sinking feeling it would be to realize after a day or so that all I had left of a lifetime of memories and accumulations were in the back seat of my Honda Accord or Ford Taurus. Oh yeah, my job is gone too and what I have in my accounts is all I have to live on. How long could I last? Many have been faced with that reality.



WORKING TOGETHER — Local residents in Tylertown and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief workers from across the country work together to serve a meal in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. (BP photo by Bruce Mundell)

I had never heard of Tylertown, Ms., until Hurricane Katrina. It is a quiet town of just 3,000 people about eight miles north of Louisiana and 50 miles north of New Orleans. It boasts of the only traffic light in the county and is the focal point of social activity in this part of Mississippi.

Katrina stormed ashore southeast of here and marched north a few miles east but her skirt whipped at the trees and blew them southward with 75-100 mph gusts. The local history books from now on will be etched with a "before Katrina" or "after Katrina" designation.

I came to assist with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams that blew into this community from around the coun-

try with as much purpose and determination to help as Katrina blew in to destroy. Thousands of downed trees had disabled the power grid and blocked streets, leaving the town in motionless darkness.

Some of these trees were over 100 years old and had been around longer than the town. They split houses in half and pulled giant root balls from the ground, leaving holes where manicured lawns with yard furniture used to be. Roof shingles dotted the streets, and grassy areas. An occasional smell of a dead animal blended with the gas and oil mixture from the constant buzzing chainsaws. This may be mild damage according to Katrina standards but it was

catastrophic when compared to an ordinary storm.

The people of Tylertown stood with their mouth dropped at the destruction and then stood in awe again as they watched Southern Baptists care for them. The feeding unit from Michigan prepared food for the community, while chainsaw teams from Alabama, Indiana, and Tennessee cut a path through the fallen timber — and into the hearts of the residents. Shower units from Georgia and Texas were on hand while area church members served food to their neighbors. Broken hearts ministered to a broken community. Although they were strangers to each other just a few hours before,

they organized together into a team to nurse the hurting town back to health.

Joe Stinson stared at the house where he was born in 1949. The roof now sat on the stairs leading to what used to be the porch. The huge oak tree that shaded the house down through the years now was cradled by the walls of the living room. The giant branches reached heavenward as if requesting help from above.

Henry Wilson's tired body rejoiced in the relief offered by the team of younger backs wielding chain saws and cleanup equipment. His aging bones ached from the effort he had already made in clearing his property.

It was a rare occasion when I ventured out that I didn't get a "thank you for being here" from a local.

It's not over. Like different wounds we encounter in life, so are the wounds of Hurricane Katrina's victims. Some have just superficial wounds that will heal quickly with the restoration of utilities. Some are a little more serious and will take more time to correct. They may have a yard to clean up or a building to fix. Then there are those with compound fractures. Their house may have been split in two or flooded by Katrina's rain.

For many, there are emotional scars from living through the storm. There's the stress of rubbing aching muscles of a hurting body — and nurturing a pained heart.

Let's continue to help these good people. Let's show them that not only can we lend a shoulder to the work of clean up and rebuild but we also can help absorb the tears. Although Katrina's mission was accomplished in a matter of hours, our mission will last for years.

Mundell is a member of Shadowbrook Church in Suwanee, Ga.



IN JESUS' NAME — Youth in Tylertown distribute meals prepared by Michigan Baptist disaster relief volunteers as life begins to stir again in this town 50 miles north of New Orleans devastated by Hurricane Katrina. (BP photo by Bruce Mundell)



RECOVERY UNDERWAY — Henry Wilson of Tylertown watches a Baptist chain saw team tackle the cleanup of his yard after Hurricane Katrina. (BP photo by Bruce Mundell)